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Remembrance and Renovation: Cultural Heritage Tourism in the Northern Philippines

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Remembrance and Renovation: Cultural Heritage Tourism in the Northern Philippines

Jenna Rochelle '18 and Sam Pack, Ph.D.

Research Question

In what ways does tourism impact cultural heritage?

What are the goals, barriers, and predictions of various stakeholders as they participate in and respond to the tourism industry?

Abstract

Critical Heritage Preservation theory asserts that the preservation of some heritage over others is not accidental or natural (Rico 2015). The ways in which varying groups and governmental organizations interact with the cultural heritage tourism industry are central to the preservation of the heritage on tour. My research interrogates the responses of stakeholders to the impact of tourism on cultural heritage in both the rural and urban context, highlighting their actions, goals, and barriers. Baguio and Batad, two tourism hotspots in the Cordillera region of the Philippines, embody the challenges associated with creating a “fun” tourist experience while safeguarding cultural heritage. Baguio is lovingly referred to as the “summer capital of the Philippines,” but its promotion of an indigenous cultural mishmash and neglect of colonial heritage has incited several community members into action. This action has revealed a lack of central planning and conflict over what constitutes heritage preservation. Idyllic Batad is home to the UNESCO World Heritage Ifugao Rice Terraces, but the economic viability of the terraces has resulted in their abandonment and degradation, slowly eroding the reason for the region’s tourism industry. The community’s efforts to develop infrastructure are frustrated by limitations imposed by governmental and international organizations. In both Baguio and Batad, there is a glaring lack of communication and oversimplification that stakeholders face as they work to preserve (or pervert) heritage.

Research Setting



Fig. 1: View of Batad Rice Terraces

Batad

- UNESCO World Heritage Rice Terraces
- Increased tourism and infrastructure development
- Abandonment of Rice Terraces
- Generational Divide regarding Cultural Heritage Practices

Baguio

- “Summer Capital” of the Philippines
- Colonized by Americans with a carrying capacity of 25,000 (Current permanent population is 300,000)
- Government and Private Industry promote pan-indigenous cultural practices to attract tourists
- Rapid industrialization and urbanization



Fig. 2: View of Baguio Houses

Methodology & Informants

- Three Weeks in Baguio
- One week in Batad
- Semi-Structured Interviews
- Participant Observation



Fig. 3: Map of Research Locations

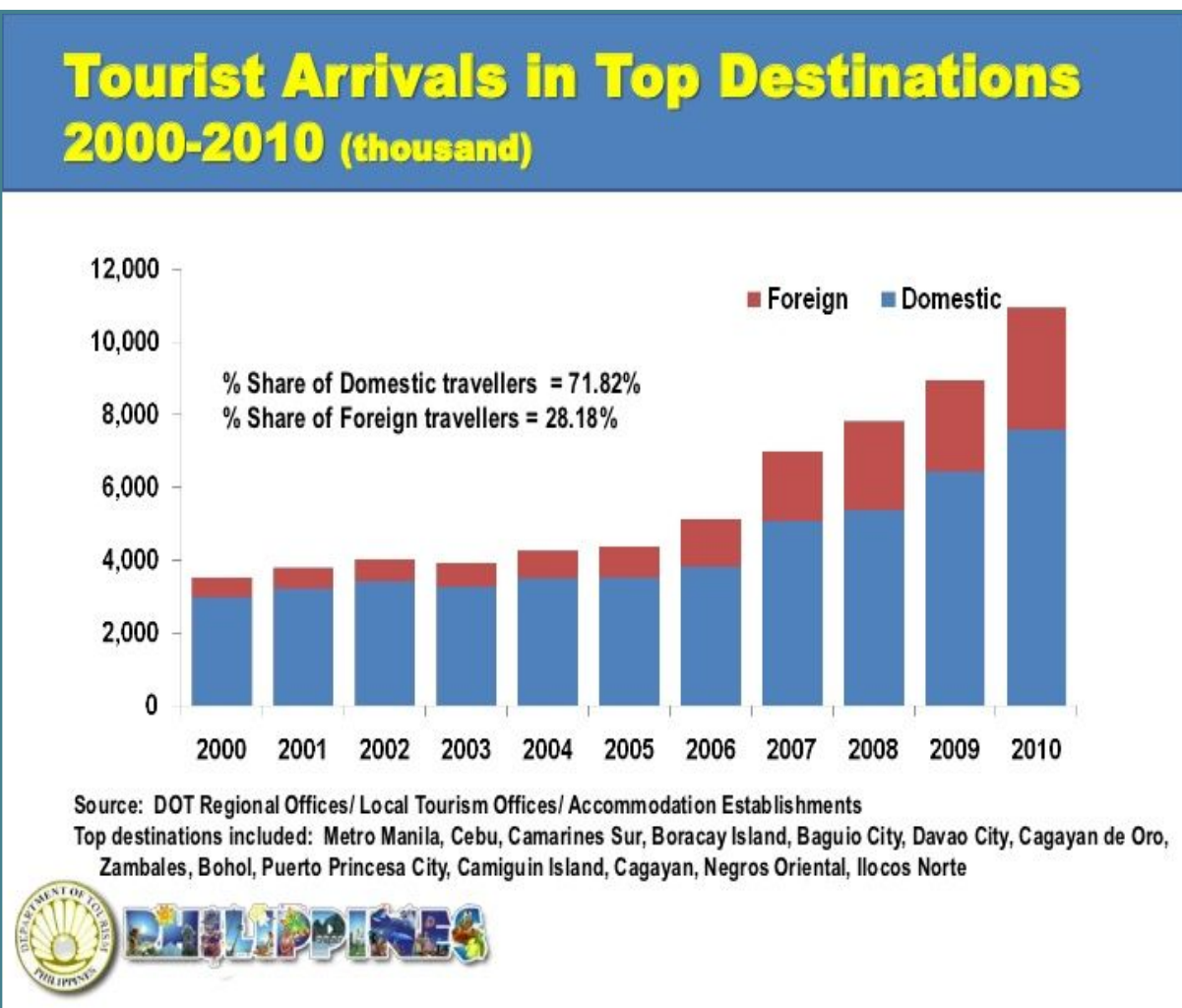


Fig. 5: Tourism Statistics

Government: Department of Tourism, Baguio Tourism Office, Banaue Municipal Council

Private Industry: SunTrust, Mega Pines Development, Casa Vallejo, Venus Parkview, Tamawan, Easter Weaving Room, Various Inn Keepers

Community/ Grassroots: Save Baguio, The Baguio Heritage Foundation, The Baguio We Want, MaryKnoll Ecological Sanctuary, Cordillera Youth Association, Farmers, Ilike Artist Village



Fig. 4: Domestic Tourist in Baguio City



Fig. 6: Shoes from Easter Weaving



Fig. 7: Degradation of Banaue Terraces

Conclusions

- Tourism is a threat to cultural heritage
- The preservation of cultural heritage is not possible without human intervention
 - Human intervention often leads to the perversion of the very heritage that is in need of preservation
 - This perversion results from a lack of communication between stakeholders and is reflected in varied perspectives on the current state of Baguio and Batad
- Implications for other countries that utilize cultural heritage tourism as a primary source of economic growth
 - Holistic tourism plan
 - Interest groups must work in tandem

Government



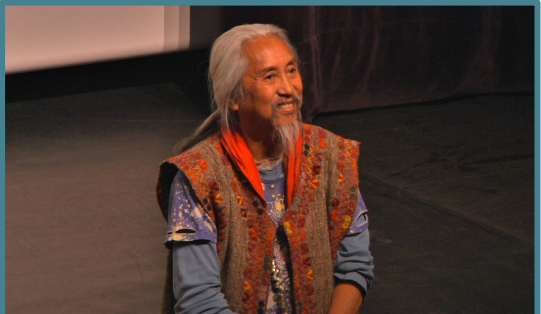
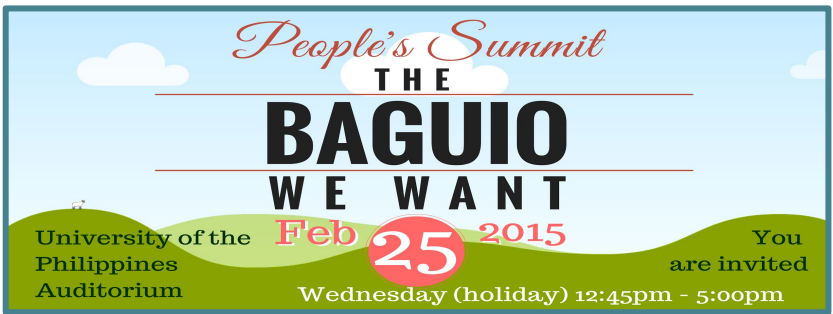
| | <i>Baguio</i> | <i>Batad</i> |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Goals | Emphasis on economic benefits Multicultural practices for profit | Infrastructure development Controversial role of UNESCO “Authenticity” |
| Barriers | Failure to recognize cultural appropriation and tourism’s negative impacts on local groups | UNESCO Contradictions Resistance to infrastructure |
| Future | Symbiosis of cultural heritage and tourism-- overall beneficial | Tourists will continue to visit and demand “authenticity” |

Private Industry



| | <i>Baguio</i> | <i>Batad</i> |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Goals | Economic profit Commodification of Culture | Economic profit and community stability |
| Barriers | Tourist attractions exploit indigenous culture b/c lack of communication and indigenous are complicit in exploitation | People entering the private industry are “abandoning” cultural heritage/farming |
| Future | Tourists will always want commodified culture, they will fulfill the supply for the demand | The abandonment of the terraces is not harmful to tourism industry, infrastructure will attract more tourists |

Community/Grassroots



| | <i>Baguio</i> | <i>Batad</i> |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Goals | Information and Education Environmental Conservation | Leave conservation and preservation to outside groups |
| Barriers | Class Divisions Government prioritizes economic incentives over others | Youth are lazy Professionalization, economic incentives, and education |
| Future | Need to find a balance between indigeneity and modernization “cultural brakes” | The terraces will be abandoned but tourists will persist Preservation is someone else’s job |

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